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THE
PLEASURES OF RELIGION,
AND
OTHER POEMS.

THE
PLEASURES OF RELIGION,

A POEM:

IN TWO PARTS.

WITH

OTHER POEMS.

BY

Thomas

x
O. PRESCOTT HILLER.



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THE
PLEASURES OF RELIGION.

PART I.



THE
PLEASURES OF RELIGION.

PART I.

RELIGION IN THE GOLDEN AGE.

IMAGINATION'S charms the Muse hath sung ;
The joys of Memory have found a tongue ;
Hope's bright illusions, painting earth as heaven,
Displayed in glowing verse, have now been given.⁽¹⁾

And thou, Religion, hast not thou a voice
To bid the sorrowing sons of men rejoice ?
Hast thou no scenes to spread before their view,
Landscapes enchanting, prospects ever new ?
Hast thou no tales to tell of joy and love,
In earth's fair bowers, in brighter worlds above ?

O yes! beyond all Memory's gathered store,
 Beyond Imagination's utmost power,
 Beyond e'en Hope's desires and fancies high,
 Religion's joys bloom everlastingly.

11

Look back to earliest periods of time,
 When young Humanity, in eastern clime,
 Sported in joy 'midst Eden's bowers so fair,
 And knew no sorrow, heaviness, or care.
 Tell me,—whence came such happiness and peace,
 Such joy of heart, serenity, and ease?

20

Was it, that groves majestic waved around,
 And breezes breathed a soft Æolian sound?
 Was it, that gurgling brooks flowed freshly by,
 And outspread lakes gave image of the sky?
 Was it, that birds of thousand various hues
 Their notes poured forth, the listeners to amuse,
 Warbling all day, and Philomel⁽²⁾ all night,
 Perpetual concert for the ear's delight?
 Could any earth-born charms that bliss inspire,
 Which filled the soul, precluding e'en desire?

30

O no! not from the earth such joys could spring : 31
 No outward pleasures peace of mind can bring.
 'Twas heaven-descended, flowing from above,
 Daughter of God, offspring of perfect Love :
 'Twas from the inner landscape of the mind,
 Lofty perceptions, images refined,
 Bright flowers of thought, fair fruits of loving deeds,
 The sweets of charity, their own best meeds,
 The heart's pure fountains, whence joy's rivers roll,
 The Paradise within, the Eden of the soul. 40

It was Religion in the human heart,
 That gave to life its peaceful, blessed part.
 Religion's light illumed the mind serene,
 And threw its softness over every scene ;
 Religion's warmth, all glowing in the soul,
 Lifted the spirit to the starry pole,
 Opened the heavens, and showed bright angels there,
 Revealed the Lord's blest face, Divinely fair ;
 Thus joining earth and heaven in union sweet,
 As God intended heaven and earth to meet. 50

In that sweet elder time, the Golden Age, 51
 Whereof hath writ the poet and the sage,
 Angels with men held converse,—and to sight,
 To ear, to heart, brought exquisite delight.
 In the still evening hour, when now the Sun
 Had sunk to golden rest, his duty done,—
 When o'er the east rose the majestic Moon,
 About to bring night's softer, silvery noon,—
 When 'neath the ancient tree, in love's sweet bond,
 The patriarchal circle gathered round,— 60
 Lo! on a sudden, visitors appear,
 With faces radiant from the upper sphere.

Startled, but not alarmed, they quick arise,
 And meet their heavenly guests with loving eyes.
 Full well they know the region whence they come,—
 That beauteous land they 're wont to call their home;
 For earth, they know, is but the traveler's road
 To heaven above, man's lasting, blest abode.

“We come,” the bright ones said, “our watch to keep,
 Fast by your heads, while locked in balmy sleep; 70

And through the livelong night we'll silent stay, 71
And wake you fresh at break of morrow's day :
'Tis our good Lord's command. And soon to view
Heaven's gorgeous scenery He will ope to you,
That charming visions, through the peaceful night,
May entertain your happy spirits' sight.
But, first, instruction we are bid to give,
That so you may for heaven know how to live."

So spake the angels. And with solemn word,
They taught the nature of the blessed Lord ; 80
His goodness, tenderness, Parental love,
His wisdom, might, and majesty above ;
His wide-extended rule o'er earth and heaven,
The life from Him to all His creatures given.
They taught that this good Lord the earth had made,
And through wide space the starry heavens had spread,
That all these worlds He might with beings fill,
Endowed with minds to know His holy will,
With hearts to love Him, and with souls adore,
And so be blessed with joys forevermore. 90

Yet not on earth forever would they live : 91
 A world more beautiful He had to give,—
 A heaven on high, transcendently sublime,
 Beyond the bounds of ever changing time.
 There would they dwell, and never count the years,
 There know no sorrow, and there shed no tears
 Save those of melting hearts' seraphic joy,
 When love and praise their grateful thoughts employ.

“One thing, one easy thing, is all the task,”
 The angels said, “which your kind Lord doth ask. 100
 Hold fast to Him, for He is life alone ;
 Him your dependence sole, unceasing own ;
 To Him ascribe your powers, your loves, your bliss,
 Acknowledge Him the fount of happiness ;
 His laws obey, and do His gentle will,
 And joy perpetual shall attend you still.”

They ceased ; and sudden vanished from the view :
 Yet not far distant gone, the patriarch knew ;
 He knew their promise they would strictly keep,
 And present, though unseen, watch o'er their sleep. 110

And now to rest the family retire : 111

But first, around their loved and honored sire
 They kneel in grateful praise and fervent prayer,
 'Neath the still stars and balmy moonlit air.
 Upward to heaven's kind Lord their souls they lift,
 Confessing all their joy His gracious gift,
 And promising to walk the steadfast way,
 That leads to realms of everlasting day.

Then to their slumbers sweet they lay them down,
 Beneath their simple tabernacle brown, 120
 Whose free folds waving with the airs of night,
 Fan their soft sleep, and yield a cool delight.
 Full wide the open door unguarded stands,
 No fierce beasts dreaded, and no roaming bands ;
 For crime not yet was known upon the earth,
 Not yet had Sin to Terror given birth,
 But Peace her gentle reign, by night, by day,
 Held o'er the world, with undisputed sway.

All now is still : no sound disturbs the night :
 The watchful stars shed down their tremulous light : 130

The moon, now high ascended, full and clear, 131
 Throws o'er the earth her silver mantle fair.
 All, all is hushed. As God's all-seeing eye
 Looks down in silence from His place on high,
 His heart Divine swells with parental joy,
 A father's rapture o'er his sleeping boy.

Hark! hark! what strain steals soft upon the ear,
 Like music from a higher, heavenly sphere?
 So soft, so charming sweet, it melts the soul:—
 Now loud and grand, the harmonious billows roll:— 140
 Then soft again, they die in peace away,
 Like the last lingering beams of parting day.

The sleepers hear it—see, they stir in sleep:
 A radiant smile breaks o'er their slumbers deep;
 Their murmuring lips their raptures strive to tell.
 Hark! now, again, the strains seraphic swell—
 Louder and louder—till all heaven seems full
 Of mingling music that enchants the soul.

They start—they wake: "O what—O where is this?
 Methought I was in heaven, in angel's bliss: 150

What glorious scenes before my sight appeared! 151
 What harmonies angelical I heard!
 Voices seraphic sung in heavenly choirs,
 And harpers played upon their golden wires;
 While all, with eyes uplifted, beaming love,
 Poured forth their worship to their Lord above.
 O 'twas a sight, to stir the inmost soul!
 Was it a dream—no more?—now, silent all!”

Thus each to other spake, and wondering gazed
 With mutual, earnest looks and air amazed. 160
 Still slept the aged patriarch, while peace
 And beauteous innocence o'erspread his face.
 But now, by earthly voices roused, he woke,
 And thus in gentle accents calmly spoke:

“Be not amazed, my children,—I, too, heard:
 To my eyes, too, those charming sights appeared;
 And oft, before, has this delight been given,
 To view the gorgeous scenes of opening heaven.
 Be pure, my children, your good Lord obey,
 And oft these beauteous lights will gild life's way.” 170

He scarce had ceased, when to their waking sight 171
 A vision oped, more full of deep delight,
 Sublimar far than aught their dreams had shown :—
 Before them stood the glorious Lord—alone :
 In majesty Divine, in radiant light,
 Beaming resplendent to their dazzled sight.
 They looked—and yet to look they scarce could dare :
 Their ravished spirits seemed upborne on air—
 A thrill ecstatic pierced their deepest soul—
 A melting softness wrapped their being whole. 180

'Twas He, the very Lord, who after came
 To Zion's hill,—and Jesus was his name ;
 Who, to redeem fall'n man—in purest love
 To earth descended from His realms above,
 And, clothed with mortal flesh, the Powers dire
 Of darkness fought, and snatched men from their ire.
 “ Your father Abraham ”—that Saviour said—
 “ Rejoiced my day to see—he saw—was glad.”^(c)
 Thus oft, in vision, in the olden time,
 Did the high God reveal Himself sublime, 190
 Confirmed His children's faith by open sight,
 And through their souls diffused supreme delight.

Not long the view ecstatic could they bear : 193
Slowly the Form Divine dissolved in air,
As closed their spirit-sight. And now, again,
They found themselves on earth, still living men,
And, awe-struck, whispered low, with mutual gaze,
And on their knees bowed down in prayer and praise.

And now, once more, soft slumber gently stole
Upon their dazzled eyes and raptured soul ; 200
And through the peaceful night delightful dreams
Pictured that happy land, whereon the beams
Of the bright Sun of Righteousness e'er shine,—
The land that basks beneath the smile Divine.

At length the morning dawns. God's glorious sun,
Pouring his warming flood o'er every one—
Image of Him whose love unceasing flows
Alike on all, nor change nor cooling knows—
Majestic rises in the golden East,
Waking the world anew to life's rich feast. 210

“Wake, gentle ones! the morn is here!”

211

So spake a silvery voice within the ear
 Of those still sleepers. Quick they ope their eyes ;
 They know the angels' call, and straight arise.
 And first upon their knees, beside their bed,
 In grateful thanksgiving they bow the head,
 And bless their kind Lord for his tender love,
 Who, watching o'er them from his place above,
 Throughout the peaceful night sweet dreams had given,
 And opened to their sight the scenes of heaven ; 220
 Nay, who himself at midnight's hour had come,
 And with His face Divine illumed their humble home.

“To Thee, O Lord,” in simple words they say,
 “Our thanks we give for granting us this day.
 Through the night's sleep, by thy kind power alone,
 The heart has beat, the breath has come and gone ;
 From Thee alone life's glowing tide was poured ;
 By Thee is now our consciousness restored.
 To Thee we dedicate this new day given ;
 O may we live to Thee, to love, to heaven !”

230

And now the simple morning meal is spread, 231
Pleasant and plenteous, meet for hand and head :
No luscious luxuries, to tempt the taste
Beyond health's bounds,—no gross, excessive feast :
Pure moderation, with her firm behest,
Presided o'er all joys, and gave them zest.

Then to their daily labors go they forth,
Not irksome, nor excessive. Harmless mirth,
Kind words, and light hearts, cheer the healthful toil,
As they bend o'er the fresh and virgin soil, 240
And bare its bosom to the genial sun,
And sow their seed. At noon their work is done.
And home they wend their pleasant, jocund way,
To spend the hours of the declining day
In sweet familiar converse. Flowing talk,
The cheerful mid-day meal, the evening walk,
With words of wisdom from the aged sire,
And music on their reeds and simple lyre,
These make the gliding hours go swiftly by,
Charming this life, while ripening for the sky. 250

Not yet had Avarice, with iron hand, 251
 Relentless soul, insatiable demand,
 To fill its coffers with superfluous wealth,
 Destroyed man's joys and comforts, heart and health ;
 Grinding the faces of the starving poor,
 Itself a slave to its own thirst for more,
 Toiling to death for phantom-joys ne'er given,
 Losing at once peace here, and hope of heaven.
 Such monstrous folly had not yet found birth,
 Not yet was known this greatest curse of earth. 260
 Why, work was made for man, not man for work :
 This knows the wandering Arab or the Turk
 Better than civilized and Christian men,
 Who throw their lives away for useless gain.
 Gentle activity gives life its zest,
 And useful labour serves to sweeten rest :
 Thus Heaven, in love, hath given work to man,—
 'Tis part of God's all-wise, eternal plan.
 But toil excessive its own end defeats,
 And turns to bitterness life's choicest sweets ; 270
 Makes man a beast of burthen, bent to earth,
 Forgetful of his soul's immortal worth.

And now the sun was setting in the west, 273
Sinking 'mid gilded curtains to his rest.

And soon came forth the modest star of eve,
Stealing like maiden coy to meet her love ;
Veiling its brightness with the twilight beam,
That made its beauty more attractive seem.

And then came on that sweet and pensive hour,
Most charming of the day,—when fancy's power 280
Rules o'er the mind, and in the darkening air
Conjures bright visions up, and revels there.

This is the hour, when friend with bosom friend
Maintains sweet converse ; face to face doth bend,
As o'er the features gathering shadows throw
A mystic charm, or tinge with evening's glow,—
And in the ear are whispered tales of joy
Now long gone by, that seems without alloy,—
Or confidential sorrows forth are poured,
And the heart's long-locked secrets now are heard. 290

But, more than all, is this the hour of love.
In the recess of some deep-bosomed grove,

Or wandering slowly by a purling stream, 293
 Whereon the skies reflect their fading beam,—
 Or set within the sofa's social arms,
 Whose soft support adds grace to beauty's charms,
 The lover woos at this sweet hour his fair,
 Whose half-hid blushes answering love declare.

Across the plain a distant tent was seen,
 Now nearly hid by evening's gathering screen. 300
 Above it peered the lovely western star,
 Bright Venus, glittering from her home afar.
 In that dim tent a treasure was contained,
 More precious far than all the 'wealth of Ind,'
 Or California's or Australia's mines,
 To which this Age's heart so fond inclines.
 That was an Age of Gold—but gold of heaven,
 When love celestial, joy, and peace were given :
 This is an Age of Gold—but gold of earth,
 Offspring of Avarice, a monstrous birth,— 310
 When man will leave his home, his friends, his bride,
 His ease, his comfort, and all joys beside,

To grovel in the gold-producing ground, 313
 Grudging no toils, so yellow ore be found.
 O, would men take but half the pains to win
 Heaven's bounteous riches, and to gather in
 Treasures of truth and knowledge, and the store
 Of sweet and blest affections more and more,—
 They would on earth true happiness secure,
 And, after, heaven's eternal bliss ensure. 320

Not such an Age was that sweet ancient time,
 Whereof I write,—the world's delightful prime.
 Then nought was valued but the wealth of soul—
 Those pure and lofty thoughts, that rise and roll
 Like waves of light o'er the exalted mind,
 And charm the intellect with joys refined;
 But sweeter still, those blisses of the heart,
 Which Heaven to man doth graciously impart,—
 Pure love conjugal,⁽⁴⁾ God's most precious gift,
 Which he who knows not, is of joy bereft. 330

The patriarch's circle sudden misses one,
 A beauteous youth, to early manhood grown,

Light of the house, his aged father's pride, 333
 The only son that yet had brought no bride.
 Arch looks and kindly smiles from face to face
 Pass pleasant round, when marked his vacant place :
 Full well they knew the course his steps had ta'en,—
 To that dim distant tent across the plain,
 To gaze upon his cherished treasure there,
 To woo a sweet and lovely maiden fair. 340

Conjugal⁽⁴⁾ love! the sweetest gift of Heaven,
 To men below, to hearts of angels given!
 Enrapturing joy! union of spirits two,
 In bonds indissolubly twined and true,
 When heart to heart, and thought to thought respond,
 With looks of love and sweet endearments fond!
 When God made man, and placed him on this earth,
 Not one but twain He formed him from his birth;
 Two parts—one being, one angelic mind,
 Each to the other longingly inclined. 350
 An intellect was he—and she, a love :
 Together,—filled with blessing from above ;

But he, alone, was cold, unfruitful truth, 353
 Like light of winter, and in form uncouth ;
 While she, alone, an ardent, graceful mind,
 Yet wanted light,—for love, you know, is blind :
 But both, united, made one perfect man,
 And God beheld His full-completed plan.

Such is the source of pure conjugal love :
 'Tis not of earth—'tis born of heaven above. 360
 Its very fountain is the glorious Lord :
 In Him is God, and with God is the Word.
 Wisdom and Love in Him united shine :
 There we behold a Marriage all Divine.
 So, to the Church, His Bride surpassing fair,
 The Lord is wedded :—how sublime a Pair !
 Goodness and Truth, in each angelic mind,
 As Will and Understanding, close conjoined,—
 These form the heavenly marriage in the soul ;
 From this pure fount all inmost blisses roll. 370
 But when these principles a form assume,
 He, manly truth—and she, love's beauteous bloom,—

O, then the marriage is a perfect thing, 373
 Surpassing all the mind's imagining.
 Each to each clinging, as two parts of one,
 They find celestial blisses now begun.
 He has no self—in her his life is found :
 She has no self—to him her soul is bound :
 Each loves the other's thought, the other's will,
 Each strives the other's cup of joy to fill. 380
 One heart they have, one mind, one life and soul,
 Two beauteous forms—one perfect human whole.
 In such a union heaven is seen portrayed :
 Such is the fairest thing that God hath made.

Alas ! how few, in this degenerate age,
 Know aught of such a bliss !—" A wondrous page,
 A tale incredible," they quick exclaim,
 " Is this, of such a union : 'tis a name,
 But no reality : we 're wedded long,
 And we can sing no such a charming song." 390
 Ah true ! most true ! How can the groveling soul,
 In selfishness enwrap—its being whole

Bent on the chase of worldly fame or gain, 393
 Or sunk in sensuality profane,
 Or sacrificed to pride's absurd display,
 To love of dress, and show, and flaunting gay—
 How can such spirits aught conceive of heaven,
 Or know the pure delights that God has given?

It is Religion in the heart of man,
 That bright reveals our good Creator's plan : 400
 She holds the key that opes the doors of bliss ;
 She guards the secret stores of happiness,
 Which God reserves for those that walk the way,
 That leads to mansions of eternal day.

Mere passion is a flame that soon expires ;
 'Tis kindled from the earth, to earth retires ;
 But love conjugal is a flame of heaven,
 And from the Lord above is constant given.
 And, like the sacred altar-fire of old,
 Which, lighted from the sun, did ne'er grow cold,— 410
 So, the pure flame of love from God that flows—
 The Sun of Righteousness—no cooling knows,

But blazes ever on the altar-heart,
 Purest of joys, of life the sweetest part.

413

In that fair Golden Age before the flood,
 When still the human heart retained the good
 Which God at first had given,—ere yet the fall
 From primal innocence had marred it all,—

O then, among the blisses of the soul,
 Conjugal love held paramount control,—

420

Pouring its glowing tide through every breast,
 Giving to every joy a rapturous zest.

Two youthful beings, for each other made,

Moulded by Hands Divine for mutual aid,

Expressly formed to fit each other's mind,

Thought matching thought, and heart to heart inclined,—

When, led by Providence, they sudden met,

A flash electric through their souls was lit :

Each beating heart perceived its partner nigh,

Hand spoke to hand, and kindling eye to eye :

430

Not long could they be severed,—God had given

Each to the other's soul, for earth, for heaven.

Such was the youthful pair, that now at eve 433
 In yonder tent poured forth their happy love.
 Clasped in each other's arms, cheek pressed to cheek,
 They needed not the voice of words to speak
 Their mutual flame. The silent breathing deep,
 The pressure of the hand, the will to weep,
 The soul-filled eyes that looked their utter love,—
 Or closed in rapturous sense, when, like the dove, 440
 Their lips united breathed each other's breath,
 And uttered murmuring sounds of love till death
 And then forever,—O, these tokens dear
 Told that an influence from the heavenly sphere
 Was pressing on them, binding into one
 Those partner souls, whose union was begun :
 And God above looked down on them and smiled
 With love unutterable, like mother's for her child.

'Mid joys like these, with various converse sweet,
 The charmèd evening hours with flying feet 450
 Passed noiseless by ; for Love knows nought of time,—
 It cometh from a sphere where all is Prime.

But, looking forth, they see the silver moon
 Riding full high in heaven : 'tis near night's noon. 453
 " Adieu! adieu! my own sweet love," he says,
 " We now must part; but soon the happy days
 Will joyous come, when thou 'lt be wholly mine,
 And this dear hand I shall ne'er more resign."

Across the moonlit plain he bounds in joy,
 So full his heart of bliss without alloy. 460
 Her lovely image still his steps attends;
 Her beauteous face still sweetly o'er him bends:
 She's with him still: ah yes! space cannot part
 Two spirits bound in union of the heart.

Reaching his home,—ere down to rest he lies,
 He lifts to Heaven above his grateful eyes;
 Blesses the bounteous God, who richly pours
 Such joys on man from His exhaustless stores:
 And prays that still that kind protecting Arm
 Through all the night may guard from every harm. 470
 Nor does he fail to utter fervent prayers
 For that loved one who all his wishes shares,

And who herself at this same hour hath given 473
 An ardent prayer for him to listening Heaven.
 God hears them both, and answers both in love :
 Their prayers ascending to the throne above,
 Like intermingling incenses arise,
 Diffusing fragrance sweet through all the skies ;
 For prayer from loving hearts, perceived in heaven,
 Heightens e'en angels' bliss, like joy o'er sins forgiven. 480

Thus peacefully flowed by those Golden days,
 In innocence, and love, and joy, and praise.
 Earth was no vale of tears : a world of smiles,
 Of light, and beauty, peace, and pleasant toils.
 Life was delightful, and all strown with flowers,
 A path to heaven amidst enchanting bowers ;
 A paradise below, an Eden fair,
 Wherein for bliss still loftier to prepare.
 Such was the life the good Creator gave ;
 And such—had man ne'er sinned—he still would have. 490
 It was Religion in the human heart,
 That brought these joys, and gave life's happiest part ;

It was the childlike looking to their God 493
And trust in Him, that blessed the path they trod ;
It was His lovely presence in the soul,
That brightened, warmed, beatified the whole.
And when they reached the end of life's soft way,
They oped their eyes on yet a brighter day :
Death was no death—'twas but the entrance given
To new celestial joys, the bliss of heaven. 500

END OF PART FIRST.

THE
PLEASURES OF RELIGION.

PART II.



THE
PLEASURES OF RELIGION.

PART II.

RELIGION IN THE IRON AGE.

A PICTURE of the happy Golden Age
Hath thus been drawn. Now, turn the virgin page :
Lo ! soiled and blackened are the leaves of Time
With many a tear, with many a fearful crime.
Man, in the image of his Maker made,
Has lost that Heavenly impress, and hath paid
The awful penalty in sufferings dire,
In sickness, famine, loss by flood and fire,
In griefs unutterable, in joyless hours,
In sadness, weariness, and deadened powers,

In loss of friends, in partings, sighs, and tears, 11
 In morbid melancholy, doubts and fears,
 In misery, madness, desperation, death :—
 And, when gasped out this life's last troubled breath,
 Waking anew to yet a darker scene,
 Where lost souls wander wild with furious mien.

Lo! such the miseries that Sin brings forth!
 Such sorrows came, when Virtue left the earth!
 When man departed from his loving God,
 And pure Religion's path no longer trod, 20
 Then, first, grim monstrous forms emerged to view,
 In earth and sea and sky, all strange and new;
 Emblems of man's wild passions, fierce and dire,
 Shapes representative of hate's mad ire,
 Of cunning, cruelty, revenge, despair,
 Of avarice, licentiousness, and fear.
 The thousand evils of the human heart—
 Brood of the Serpent (Self-love's counterpart)—
 Mirrored themselves in forest, flood, and air,
 And man beheld his own vile image there. 30

Here crept the loathsome reptile on the ground, 31
 Picture of one to groveling pleasures bound ;
 There sprang the ruthless tiger on his prey,
 Image of man inflamed by passion's sway ;
 The coward wolf prowled nightly round the fold,
 The black heart's emblem, which with baseness cold
 Sweet innocence destroys. Lo ! o'er the plain
 Steals the sly fox, which would by cunning gain
 The evil end that force could ne'er attain ;
 While, poised in air, the hawk prepares to swoop 40
 The helpless chick, strayed from the sheltering coop,—
 Emblem of ruffian conquerors that seize
 Weak neighbouring states, that dwelt before in peace.

So, 'midst the flowers poisonous plants were seen,
 Diffusing death, where health and joy had been.
 These, too, were outbirths from the human mind,—
 Offspring of envy, malice, thoughts unkind :
 Hypocrisy's smooth face but hating heart,
 The slanderous word, shot like a poisoned dart,
 Wild phantasies, and barren reasonings proud, 50
 That wrap the mind in atheistic shroud,—

These are the thorns and thistles of the soul,
 The deadly weeds that taint the spirit whole,
 Or creep, like ivy, o'er the ruined mind,
 And hang festoons to deck the death they find.
 The hemlock, with its white and stately flower,
 That brought to Socrates his mortal hour,
 The deadly night-shade, and the fox-glove's bell,
 And aconite, whose buds so smoothly swell,—
 All, emanations from the unseen hell.

52

60

E'en nature's face was thus by man defiled :
 The very earth proclaimed his spirit soiled.

Behold the Conqueror, with splendid state,
 Borne in triumphal car ! Men call him great ;
 And shouting crowds huzza him on his way,
 Thoughtless exclaiming, " What a glorious day !"
 But look ! the wheels are red with human gore,
 And stained the horses' hoofs. Behind—before—
 The ghosts of slaughtered multitudes arise,
 And toss their pale arms madly in his eyes,

70

And call to Heaven for vengeance on his head,— 71
 The wretch, who laid them early with the dead.
 “ We dwelt in peace,” they cry, “ when thou didst come,
 Monster, to tear us from our happy home.”

The smiling infant in the cradle slept ;
 O'er him fond watch the hoary grandsire kept ;
 The mother, busy with her household cares ;
 The father in the field his ground prepares.
 The merry children played about the door,
 And fed the dog, that ate and looked for more ; 80
 The cat slept soundly in the old arm-chair,
 While bright-eyed mice peeped safely from their lair :
 A noon-day stillness reigned o'er all the place,
 The harmless village dwelt in trusting peace.

But hark ! what sounds are borne upon the breeze ?
 The tramp of horsemen !—who and whence are these ?
 The flying people soon their name declare—
 A murderous troop from out the distant war.
 The smoke is curling from the village-end,—
 From house to house the kindling flames extend. 90

"Fly! fly!" the cry resounds on every side,— 91
 "The murderers come!" Dark flows the crimson tide:
 The brutal soldiers entering furious strike
 Old age and helpless infancy alike:
 The aged grandsire at the cradle's side,
 The harmless babe that just awoke and died,
 The children shrieking in their terror wild,
 The mother crying, "Spare, O spare my child"—
 All perish: none is left the tale to tell:
 That smiling heaven has now become a hell. 100

O War! foul spirit from the realms below,
 That revel'st in the pangs of human woe,
 How long shalt thou pollute this beauteous world?
 How long thy blood-stained banners be unfurled?
 Shall they who wear the gentle Saviour's name,
 Their footsteps show besmeared with blood and flame?
 Professing Him who washed His creatures' feet,
 Shall Christian men in furious battle meet?
 Meek-eyed Religion! thou alone canst save
 Poor suffering mortals from this bloody grave. 110

Into men's hearts when thou shalt fully come, 111
And there shalt make thy peaceful, blessed home,
Breathing sweet calm upon the ruffled soul,
And gentleness, and love, and self-control,—
Then quenched will be the eyes' revengeful fire,
Then stopped the words and deeds of savage ire,
Then dropped the sword from out the hostile hand,
And smiling peace will brighten every land :
For when the Prince of Peace hath fixed his reign
In human hearts, Eden will bloom again. 120

But see ! another form of vice appears—
Mean Avarice, with train of anxious fears.
In yonder garret, with its twinkling light,
There sits a wretched man, this stormy night,
Wrinkled, and haggard, pale, and sick, and cold,
Counting once more his heaps of yellow gold.
Midnight hath tolled from yonder steeple's form—
That giant sentinel—amid the storm.
Sudden the miser starts :—“ What noise was there ?
I heard a robber's foot upon the stair.” 130

A clammy sweat upon his forehead stands,— 131
 His eyes in glistening glare are fixed,—his hands
 In terror clenched.—Behold the wretch's fear!
 'Twas but the swinging of a shutter near.
 But to his ear all sounds are hostile, all
 The world to him is foe, all things appall.
 He fears to look around,—he fears the night,—
 He fears the day and Heaven's all-cheering light.
 His life is one long fear: an anxious dread
 Hangs ceaseless o'er him—shadows from the dead. 140
 Yes! at that midnight hour—though all unseen
 By eye of flesh—dark spirits there convene,
 And haunt their victim. O'er his soul they spread
 A gloomy pall, and weave around his head
 A magic web, through which he trembling sees
 Ten thousand frightful forms and phantasies.

Ah! little thinks the youth, when first he leaves
 The path of innocence, and straight conceives
 Some plan of wealth, ambition, pleasure, sin,
 Hoping delights to find or honours win,— 150
 That then a yoke he takes upon his neck,
 The yoke of demons, at whose nod and beck

Henceforward he must go,—a vile bondslave 153
 To Hell's fierce Powers, that dig his spirit's grave,
 That goad the conscience, rack the soul, and tear
 The heart with anguish, ending in despair.

“ Who sin committeth, is Sin's servant still : ”—
 So spake the All-wise Saviour. But God's will
 Whoso shall do, shall peace and freedom find,
 A cheerful spirit, a contented mind. 160
 “ Come unto me,” He said, “ and trust my might,
 My yoke is easy, and my burthen light.”

But who goes there, with tottering step and slow,
 With bloated face, red eye, and look of woe,—
 With tattered garments flaunting in the wind,
 Through which the winter blasts free entrance find ?
 Who is that wretched man ?—can it be true ?
 Is that the noble youth I early knew,
 With talents, wealth, and friends, and prospects high,
 And grace to charm e'en lovely woman's eye ? 170
 Alas ! 'tis he, indeed ! How sadly changed !
 Wanders his eye with look of mind deranged :

Despair upon his visage sits, and gloom 173
 That seems a shadow from his opening tomb.
 This life to him is nought, this world a blank ;
 And for the next—" Hark ! hark ! the devils clank—
 The devils clank my chains," he cries aloud.
 At once around him draws a wondering crowd.
 " I see them there ! away, ye fiends ! not yet !
 I know my wretched soul ye long to get— 180
 But 'tis not time :—no ! no ! there shines the sun—
 I 'm living yet—my breath is not yet gone.
 Oh ! oh ! they have me now—my vitals tear—
 They hold me o'er the flood,—a single hair
 Alone sustains me from the black abyss !
 See how the surges boil, and heave, and hiss,
 Far, far below me ;—on the infernal rocks
 Loud dash the roaring waves with horrid shocks.
 O save me ! save me !—down I go—I fall—
 Down—down—down,—down !"

His thrilling cries appall 190

The listening crowd, and back they stand in fear ;—
 Down on his face he falls. They pitying bear

The hapless wretch to some kind neighbour's door, 193
 Thence to the hospital,—for stricken poor
 The last retreat, except the silent grave.
 Three days and nights the wretched man did rave,
 And toss upon his bed, and call on Heaven
 To save his wretched soul by demons driven.
 What horrid sights before his eyes did glide!
 What mocking voices screeched his ear beside! 200
 What hideous faces glared from out the walls!
 What monstrous figures stalked along the halls!
 And loathsome vermin crept upon the clothes,
 And filled his bed. Or if a moment's doze
 Perchance came o'er him,—quick he'd wake and start,
 As two great eye-balls fiery rays did dart
 Into his own :—the world seemed all a-blaze :—
 " I'm burning, burning," he would cry, and raise
 Most fearful shrieks :—" the awful judgment-day
 Is come ;—I am not ready ;—pray, O pray 210
 For my poor soul, ye angels ;—Saviour, save
 My wretched spirit from hell's flaming grave."

And so he died. Ye men of pleasure, say, 213
 That careless throw your precious hours away
 In joys of sense, and sport, and song, and wine,
 And seldom seek Religion's sacred shrine,—
 O say,—when comes your last appalling hour,
 And blanched ye lie in the resistless power
 Of awful Death ;—when, looking o'er the past,
 Ye find no place of peace whereon to rest ;— 220
 When Conscience wakes the forms of buried crimes,
 That grimly stalk before your eyes,—as chimes
 The solemn midnight peal ;—or if, perchance,
 DELIRIUM TREMENS leads his horrid dance
 From out your fiery brain, and fills the room
 With frightful shapes, foreshadowing your doom :—
 Then say, O say, will ye not sorrow then,
 That ye lived not the lives of virtuous men,
 Peaceful and pure and noble ? but, like beasts,
 Have spent your careless hours in midnight feasts, 230
 In drink, and revelry, and lusts impure,
 That make the soul unable to endure
 Death's awful presence, when he stands alone
 By the bed-side, and says in hollow tone—

“ Your hour is come : prepare : my people here
Await the rattling breath :—there lies thy bier !” 235

If death be fearful, what the judgment-hour ?
Death’s but the officer, with badge and power
To bring the soul to judgment, there to hear
Its final doom :—to the celestial sphere, 240
If, while on earth, ’twas honest, good, and pure,
But to the infernal, if corrupt past cure.
There, O what miseries thy soul await !
Torment, and strife, and fury, madness, hate,
Perpetual burning longings, black despair,
And fiends delighting thy sad heart to tear !

But who comes here ? A man without a soul !
Ay, so he saith :—a brutish being whole.
Come hither, brute (nay, say not I am hard :
Is it not such thou dost thyself regard ?) 250
Let’s look at thee :—a cold and glassy eye !
Still, some expression ! Tell me,—canst thou sigh ?
Canst weep ? canst laugh ? yet further, canst thou speak ?
Canst thou articulate, or only squeak ?

Open thy mouth, let 's hear.—Why, very well ! 255
 O, thou art not a brute ; for thou canst tell
 Thy name, and where thou dwell'st : this can no brute :
 They bellow, bark, or moan, but else are mute.
 If thy soul be like theirs, why standest thou
 Erect with upward look ? why dost not bow 260
 Prone to the earth, like them, upon all fours ?
 It is the human soul within that soars
 To God its Maker, and uplifts the form
 In stately beauty ? But the groveling worm
 And beasts that perish, all are bent to earth,—
 Their destination showing from their birth.
 Say, dost thou envy them ? and would'st thou be
 The creature of a day, and never see
 The beaming splendors of that loftier state,
 Which God in love prepares for those that wait 270
 In patience on His will, and keep His Word,
 And thus become the likeness of their Lord ?

And thou deni'st this glorious hope. Around
 The country, far and near, thou 'rt constant bound,

By lecture and in talk to prove to men 275
 That they are beasts—that home is but a den—
 That thought, and love, and joy, and spirit brave
 Of high-souled man, all perish at the grave!

What monstrous folly! For, suppose thee right—
 Suppose thy doctrine to be true and bright,— 280
 Yet were it wise in man to cast away
 So sweet a hope as of immortal day?
 Doth it not cheer the spirit's saddest mood,
 When anxious cares and gloomy thoughts intrude,
 Forward to look to worlds of heavenly peace,
 Where no pain comes, where all earth's troubles cease,
 Where man's deep longings reach their happy goal,
 And joy eternal fills the raptured soul?
 And wilt thou rob us of this pleasing hope?
 Wilt thou put out our light, and bid us grope 290
 In darkness through the world, uncertain where
 Life's rough path leads, but left to blank despair?

O wretched atheist! If thou art content
 To drop existence when this life is spent,—

To live no more beyond the sunless grave, 295
 No more sweet loves to know, or joys to have,
 No more to exercise the lofty powers
 That God has given, in intellectual hours,—
 No more to see or hear thy fellow-man,
 But give up all with this life's little span :— 300
 If this thou callest joy,—why, hold thou fast
 The new-discovered blessing! may it last
 As long as 'twill! till the revealing Tomb
 Shall ope the spirit-gate, and show thy doom!

O piteous sight! a thinking man to see
 Denying God and immortality!
 Go to a madhouse, thou, and there remain:
 He that denies his Maker, is insane.
 And mark my words: when Death upon thee comes,
 And gathers that poor body to the tombs, 310
 Thou 'lt find thy soul in dark infernal caves,
 Wandering 'mid spirits lost,—where each one raves
 And mutters to himself, "There is no God!"—
 Sad maniac souls, that shriek and stare and nod.

E'en now thy spirit walks there,—all unknown 315
 To thee, indeed, but seen from Heaven's high Throne.
 He that denies his God, is now in hell—
 Already lost ;⁽¹⁾ and demons ring the knell
 Of that dead soul,—and wide the mournful tones
 Peal through the infernal vaults, 'mid horrid oaths and
 groans. 320

Turn we to milder themes. Religion's face,
 In this hard Iron Age, hath lost its grace :
 Her look, once soft and lovely as a child,
 Serene and radiant, bland, and sweet, and mild,
 Is changed to sternness ; and her pleasant call,
 So winning once, inviting, loved by all,
 Seems now a harsh command : “ Obey you must,”
 She says with threatening look,—“ or bite the dust :
 My laws and precepts keep, or God will send
 Ten thousand pangs, and torments without end.” 330

Thus sternly speaks she. And her solemn mien
 Harsh and forbidding seems ; and, like a queen

In mourning clothed, she walks with stately air 333
 And sombre majesty, more firm than fair.

She points to heaven, indeed,—but with a look
 Of awful dignity that few can brook.

Her sceptre o'er the multitude she sways,
 And bids them on; points out the rugged ways
 Which they must tread, the steeps that they must climb,
 If they would reach the heavenly Mount sublime. 340

Whence is the change? Is God no longer kind?
 Hath He forsaken man? or is His mind
 From love to harshness turned?—God changes not:
 His love is perfect, and without a blot.

As yonder sun is fiery, pouring forth
 Perpetual beams upon the verdant earth,
 Nor cools, nor checks its everlasting flow
 Of light and heat on all the world below,—
 So God unceasing pours His Spirit down
 On all His creatures, without change or frown. 350

'Tis man that changes. As revolving Earth
 Turns from the sun and makes her wintry dearth,

Her night and cold,—so man from God away 353
 Averts his heart, and makes his gloomy day.
 Then wintry is the soul, or wrapt in night,
 With passion's lurid blaze its only light.
 In that red glare, all objects false are seen :
 Vile, hideous Vice assumes a comely mien ;
 Sweet Virtue in the distance scarce appears,
 Or look forlorn and unattractive wears ; 360
 Religion, glowing with love's heavenly beams,
 Stern, in that light, and melancholy seems.

Yet is Religion stern or sad ? O no !
 'Tis Superstition that portrays her so :—
 Dark Superstition, with her cowl and cell,
 Her cross, and scourge, and melancholy bell,
 Her sackcloth, covering oft a haughty heart,
 Her solemn visage, from the soul apart ;
 Her pompous ceremonial spread to view,
 Her wordy prayers and wearying preachings⁽²⁾ too ; 370
 Her faith alone, or works alone, both dead
 For want of love, Religion's heart and head.

No! true Religion is a cheerful maid,
 In gentle looks and pleasant smiles arrayed.
 Daughter of God, she calls on men to rise,
 And seek her Father's mansions in the skies,—
 The New Jerusalem, with pearly gates,
 The heavenly home where every bliss awaits.
 "Do not," she says, "O mortals, throw away
 Your precious lives on trifles of a day :
 Do not to gain or fame devote your powers,
 Do not to sensual pleasure give your hours.
 For soon these all will fade away and die,
 Leaving the soul in blank inanity;
 Or else will fill the heart with raging fires,
 Which still will burn when mortal life expires.
 For nobler ends the immortal soul was given,
 For everlasting joys, the bliss of heaven."

373

380

'Tis thus Religion speaks, and shows the end
 To which the wise their steady steps will bend :
 To live for heaven,—to strive each day to be
 More fit for blessed immortality.

390

This is the aim ; and this alone is worth 393
 The efforts of a soul of glorious birth,—
 A child of God, to whom all things are given,
 Heir of eternity, and hope of heaven.

Eternity ! conceive the thought sublime !
 Picture a view of never ending time !
 When thrice ten thousand years have passed away,
 My soul will still exist in active day : 400
 When thrice ten million years have slowly rolled,
 I, who now write, shall still my being hold :
 Still shall I think, and speak, and feel, and love :—
 Grant, Lord, it be in heavenly courts above !
 And you, that now peruse this humble strain,
 You, too, will live—pray it be not in vain !

He lives in vain, who spends his days in sin,
 Nor e'er the noble Christian race doth win :
 He lives in vain, who never peace attains,
 Who ne'er heaven's bright, eternal mansions gains. 410
 All such have lived for nought ; and when their breath
 Ceases from earth, they find a living death :

Millions of years will roll, but still no change:—

413

Beyond the grave, alas! Hope cannot range.⁽³⁾

Man's soul is formed on earth, and here its state

To good or ill is bent, and fixed its fate :

Man's short life here determines all his course,

Settles his lot for better or for worse.

Then, who shall waste his golden hours in sin ?

Who will not strive eternal bliss to win ?

420

And is the way so dark ? O no ! 'tis bright :

“ My yoke is easy and my burthen light : ”

So spake the Lord. Religion is not sad ;

Her ways are cheerful, and her spirit glad.

No harmless pleasure true Religion chides :

Religion ne'er forbids what God provides.

Music and painting,—nay, the drama's⁽⁴⁾ art,

If purified—may all with her have part.

The graceful dance,⁽⁴⁾ the sweet ideal song,

By moderation bounded, are not wrong.

430

The joys of social life, the pleasant talk,

The merry laugh, the summer-evening walk,

The cheerful fireside game, as draughts, or chess, 433
 A recreation for minds' weariness,
 (But let no hateful gambling e'er come near—
 'Tis from beneath, and brings a deadly sphere)—
 On all these harmless sports Religion smiles :
 They soothe the spirit, fagged with daily toils.

Religion nought forbids but vile excess,
 The bane of all true joy and happiness. 440
 Thus she declares her Parent's gentle word,
 The mild directions of our blessed Lord :
 " My children, hear My word, and learn My will,
 And I your hearts with joy and peace will fill.
 For you this wide and fertile earth I've spread,
 For you, the blue transparent skies o'erhead.
 For you, I bid my warming Sun arise,
 For you, the Moon his nightly place supplies.
 All things I've made for you :—the fruits, the flowers,
 That charm your taste, or deck your garden bowers ; 450
 The birds that make sweet music to your ears,
 The beasts that serve you, and the food that cheers.

To you the sweets of social life I've given : 453

The bliss of love, that makes an earthly heaven ;

The charms of friendship, thought, and knowledge high,

Studies and duties blended pleasantly ;

With various sports to recreate the soul,

And peaceful slumbers to renew the whole.

All these, for you, my children, I ordain,

All that I give is joy, and never pain. 460

O spoil not, then, My gifts with base excess,

Which turns delights to woe and wretchedness :

Let moderation reign in every joy,

Let truth and duty govern each employ.

And look to Me, acknowledging the Source

Whence your rich stream of pleasures takes its course,

And I your joys will fill with deeper joy,

With peace and blessedness without alloy."

So speaks the gentle Saviour, who to earth,

As God incarnate, came by human birth ; 470

Who spake to men kind words, and soothed their ills,

And now, ascended, heaven's wide mansions fills,

And rules the earth and sea and every star, 473
 The whole vast universe outspread afar.
 All souls He loves, and seeks to draw to heaven ;—
 Yet one condition needfully is given :
 “Deny thyself,” He says, “and take the cross.”
 What’s the denial ? what the painful loss ?
 ’Tis to abstain from sin ; it is to lose
 The life of evil loves, which they who choose 480
 Find pleasure turned to pain ; for misery lies
 Cold at the heart of pleasure’s votaries.
 Sin is the Sodom-apple, wearing fair
 A glowing look,—but all is hollow there.
 Revenge is sweet, but ’tis the treacherous sweet
 Of mortal poison. Passion’s furious heat,
 Freely indulged, gives momentary ease,—
 But, cooling, leaves the soul in fixed disease.
 Intoxication’s cup the taste allures,—
 But hours of gloom the yielding wretch endures. 490
 Hard Avarice attains its purpose well,
 And fills its coffers,—but its end is hell :
 For selfishness can find no place in heaven,
 And to the wicked heart no peace is given.

Behold, then, what the Lord our God requires : 495
 'Tis to deny and cross these foul desires ;
 These passions to restrain, these loves to curb,
 That ever man's true peace of soul disturb ;
 'Tis to o'ercome the love of self and sin,
 And quench the raging fire of lusts within. 500
 No other cross than this the Lord commands,
 No other burthen lays upon our hands.
 Is this too hard ? He says, " My burthen's light,
 My yoke is easy ! " O no ! true delight
 Religion brings to man, nor takes away
 Aught save false joys, that end in misery.

And now, a sweet home-circle bring to view,
 A household gifted with religion true.
 E'en in this Iron Age, the Lord's own fold
 May find in innocence an Age of Gold ; 510
 For piety and love, to man's heart given,
 Can make this troubled earth a lower heaven.

Behold, when soft the Evening-Star looks down
 (The same bright gem that beamed on ages gone),

The mother calls the prattler to her knee, . . . 515
 And in mild words instructs the child to pray.
 He folds his little hands and shuts his eyes,
 And strives to lift his thought to yonder skies.
 "Our Father!"—soft he says, repeating slow
 The holy Prayer taught by our Lord below,— 520
 Who, now ascended, with the Father one,
 Reigns over all, Jesus, our God alone.
 From heaven He looks upon that lisping child,
 And hears with joy Divine its accents mild ;
 For innocence to Him is ever dear,
 And to the childlike soul He 's ever near.

"And does the Good Man hear me, when I pray?"

"O yes, my child, He hears each word you say."

"And does He see me in the dark all night?"—

"Yes! yes! dear child, the dark to Him is light." 530

"And if I'm good, then shall I go to heaven?"

Is it a pretty place?"—"To you 'll be given,

My darling child, all beauteous things up there:

Yes! 'tis a lovely place; the balmy air

Is scented with sweet flowers, and in the groves 535
 Birds sing most charmingly, and cooing doves
 Murmur among the trees. No storms there come,
 Nor winter's cold in that delightful home ;
 But charming Spring breathes ever through the bowers,
 And freshens still the ever blooming flowers ; 540
 And beauteous angels, bright and fair, are seen
 Among those winding walks of living green,
 Sporting and singing all the joyous day,
 While frisking lambs around them softly play."

" O, dear mamma, how I should like to go
 To that good place !"—" Then listen—I will show
 The way to heaven : each night and morning pray
 To your kind Lord above, and strive each day
 To do His will ; obey your parents, too ;
 Be truthful, good, and kind in all you do ; 550
 And let no angry passions e'er arise :—
 This do, my child, and thou shalt reach the skies :
 The joys of heaven you, too, shall one day share,
 And live for ever a bright angel there."

The child delighted listens ; and his mind
555
Makes quick resolves to be most good and kind,
And all-obedient, so that, when he dies,
He may attain those bright and blissful skies.
And when he lays his little head to sleep,
He prays the Lord on high his soul to keep :
560
His prayer is heard ; celestial angels watch
The livelong night around that infant's couch.

Thus are the seeds of pure religion given :
Thus does the mother mould her child for heaven.

And now the pleasant evening hours draw on.
The older children drop in, one by one ;
The father from his daily toil returns ;
Warm on the hearth the cheerful fire-light burns.
Around the social board they sit and chat,
Recount the day's experience, this and that.
570
The youngest tells the school-task aptly done,
And shows with joy the glistening medal won :
The father smiles, with feelings gratified,
Yet warns his son against a dangerous pride ;

Hasting to check self-love's first motions still,— 575
 Self-love, that serpent-root of all man's ill.

The eldest son, now near to manhood grown,
 His father's pride, esteemed, wherever known,
 For honesty and truth and heart sincere,
 And sense of right unbent by love or fear,— 580
 Relates the incidents the day has brought,
 The cares of busy trade, with trials fraught.
 The father listens with a grave concern,
 And joys to see his son's uprightness stern :—
 " Right, right, my son," he says, " you've nobly done :—
 What is the worth of gold unjustly won ?
 What is the profit, though the world you gain,
 And lose your soul ?—Your path, my son, is plain :
 In all your ways be honest, just, and true ;
 Regard your neighbour's good in all you do ; 590
 Be love to God and man your ruling end ;
 Let lofty Conscience all your steps attend.
 If tempters seek to turn you from the right,
 O never yield, but fight the Christian fight :

The Lord will help you ; and His guiding hand 595
Will lead you on through life to heaven's fair land ;
All needful things in this world you will have,
And then eternal joys beyond the grave."

So speaks the sire ; and deep the lesson given
Imprints that youthful heart and guides to heaven. 600

And now the evening's passed in various joys :
Reading aloud a pleasant hour employs ;
Music succeeds ; two blooming daughters play,
And o'er the keys exert their magic sway ;
While with his flute their brother prompt attends,
And to the choir her voice the mother lends.
The sire delighted lists the swelling strain,
And begs to hear that favorite air again.
Not uselessly the pleasing hour is spent ;
Sweet music soothes the mind with labours bent ; 610
It links together hearts in concord's ties,
And leaves for after-years fond memories ;
It elevates the soul, and scatters cares,
As troubled Saul is calmed, when David's harp he hears.

At length, the timely hour of rest draws nigh. 615
 Music and books and work are quick laid by,
 And round the table all with reverence draw,
 And list attentive to the sacred Law ;
 Or each, perchance, a portion reads in turn,
 Better the thoughts to fix, the precepts learn. 620
 That Holy Word communion opes with heaven,
 And, in its reading, light and peace are given :
 The sorrowing soul finds comfort in a Psalm :
 The Lord's invitings bring a soothing balm :
 " Let not your heart be troubled," soft He says,
 " Believe in me, and I will guide your ways."
 Around that pious circle angels bright
 Unseen are gathered, with their heavenly light ;
 For where the Holy Word is, there they dwell,
 And from the troubled mind dark shades dispel. 630
 While, in the midst, there stands a Form Divine—
 Jesus, the Saviour ; for the household shrine,
 Where " two or three are gathered in His name,"
 Is a true altar, lit with love's pure flame.

The reading ended, all devoutly kneel ; 635
 And, in few simple words, that each can feel,
 The father utters, low, a heart-felt prayer,
 Blessing the Lord for all His tender care,
 And praying that this night His mighty arm
 May be around them, to defend from harm ; 640
 And that the coming morn (if such His will)
 May find them waked in health and comfort still :
 But—more than all—he prays that grace be given
 To tread, each day, the path that leads to heaven.

And now each says to each a fond “ good night ! ”
 And all betake them to their slumbers light.
 But, ere reposing, each a private prayer
 Lifts up in silence by his bed-side there ;
 Passing the day’s events in brief review,
 Noting each fault committed, old or new, 650
 Each harsh word spoken, or ungentle look,
 —All full recorded in the soul’s life-book—
 And humbly seeking pardon of the Lord,
 And promising to watch each deed and word.

So praying, peace returns ; an angel-guard 655
 Around the sleeper keep their watch and ward.

When light-winged Morning comes, and fans their eyes,
 With prompt obedience all at once arise.
 No sluggard wins the Christian's glorious race :
 Nor heaven nor earth yields him a lofty place. 660
 He who would work God's work while yet 'tis day,
 Must up betimes, and run the heavenly way :
 Death's night-fall soon will come, and then, too late,
 The slumbering traveler knocks at Zion's gate.

In this well ordered household, none delay
 Their morning salutations prompt to pay.
 Each in his place appears, with reverent air :
 The day is opened, as it closed, with prayer.
 No tedious service, wearying youthful minds,
 But short and cheerful, such as each one finds 670
 A pleasure not a task : a Psalm is read,
 And then the Lord's own beauteous Prayer is said.
 For true Religion spreads no gloom abroad,
 Nor heavy burthens lays to heap life's load ;

But lightens every duty, sheds sweet peace 675
 Through all the soul, with calm content and ease ;
 Supports in every trial, soothes each woe,
 And o'er enjoyment sheds a heavenly glow :
 Religion's pleasures fill the inmost heart,
 And from the centre gladden every part. 680

In these calm joys, their days are sweetly passed,
 Each more serene, each purer than the last ;
 For life to man no tame mill-round is given,
 But 'tis an upward path, that ends in heaven.
 They whom Religion leads, each day advance,
 And added virtues still their joys enhance.
 Passions subdued, self-will and pride o'ercome,
 Ill-temper vanquished (torment of man's home)—
 These foes cast down, with every evil thought,
 The Christian fight each day more firmly fought, 690
 Constant the soul advances, rises still,
 More and more purely doth God's holy will.
 Angels are clustering round that spirit fair,
 And for their own bright home his soul prepare :

Nearer and nearer still he draws to heaven,
Sweeter and deeper love and peace are given.
At length, a secret Voice calls, "Come away,
Come thou to realms of bright, eternal day;
Pleasures at My right hand, a boundless store,
Pleasures forevermore, forevermore."

695

700

END OF PART SECOND.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.



THE TOLL OF THE SEA-BELL.

The steamer ATLANTIC was lost in Long-Island Sound, on the 25th of November, 1846.—“It is a touching and remarkable fact,” says the *National Intelligencer*, of February 7, 1847 (nearly three months after the occurrence), “that the bell of this ill-fated steamer, supported by some portions of the wreck and the contiguous rock, still continues to toll—swept by heavy surges—the requiem of the dead.”⁽¹⁾

WHO tolls that bell? Solemn and slow,
The mournful sounds o'er the waters go:
By night, by day, while the breezes play,
'Neath sun, and moon, and stars' dim ray,
Still rings the knell:—
Who tolls that bell?

THE WAVES.

We toll the bell. And who but we
Should toll this bell o'er the deep, green sea?

We did the deed—we bade them die—
 We have them all—down there they lie
 (Save a few that we've sent ashore to tell
 For what we ring this funeral knell).
 Fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers,
 That pretty babe, and all the others—
 We have rocked them to sleep in the watery deep,
 And faithful watch we'll o'er them keep.
 And now a solemn dirge we ring,
 While the winds above in concert sing.

We ring the knell :

We toll the bell.

THE WINDS.

We toll the bell. For who but we
 Should ring this knell o'er the wide, lone sea?
 'Twas we, that from our home in the North,
 Came down on the sea, and lashed it to froth,
 And striking the helpless ship abeam,
 Drove her ashore, in spite of steam—
 Away, away to the leeward rocks,
 And pushed her on with shivering shocks,

And piled the seas on her gaping deck,
 And soon she lay a broken wreck.
 'Twas cold, very cold, and our breath, as we blew,
 Was turned into hail, that thickening flew,
 And blinded the eyes of the doomèd crew.
 Death spread his arms at the vessel's side,
 To catch them, dropping into the tide ;
 And he bore them down to his cavern deep,
 And laid them there in their long last sleep :
 Little and great, he ranged them round,
 Then gazed with joy on the prize he had found.
 Hurrah ! hurrah ! O who can stand,
 When the Winds uplift their mighty hand ?

And now our slaves,
 The obedient waves,
 Slow toll the bell,
 The funeral knell.

We ring the knell :

We toll the bell.

* * * * *

Hush ! hush ! ye cruel winds and waves :
 Ye have a master—ye 're but slaves.

Remember ye not—on Galilee's sea
(In the olden time, when young were ye),
How wildly ye dashed, and fiercely blew,
And tossed the bark, with its frightened crew,
And swept it o'er with rushing waves,
And opened wide your deep sea-graves?
Then rose there One from His peaceful sleep,
And looking forth on the boisterous deep,
Rebuked the winds, and told His will,
And to the sea said, "Peace! be still!"
Then what did ye, O winds?—away
Ye sped, or sunk in hushed dismay;
And down, O waves, your crests ye drew,
And vanished, like the morning dew
Before the face of the glorious Sun:—
The Lord but spake, and it was done.

And doth not He, who ruled you then,
Still reign on high o'er heaven and men?
Doth He not still command the waves?
Are ye not still His subject slaves?
A mission of good it was, and love,
He sent you on, from Heaven above,—

To call His faithful children home,
To mansions bright, no more to roam.
The man of God, with lifted eye,
The master, earnest to save or die,
The youth, with hopes so high and warm,
The little ones, who knew no harm,—
All, all, He called away that hour,
To bless with love and light, and power:—
(Save those who *would* not thus be blessed,
And e'en for such 'twas the moment best.)
Behold them now—that gathered band—
Together reached the spirit-land!
Still leads them on,—that man of God;
Still points along the heavenward road:
“There! there!” he cries, “see angels bright,
Rejoicing in that heavenly light!
They come—they come! hark! hark! they say,
‘Welcome to heaven’s felicity!’”

Now say, O winds, what have ye done,
But work the will of the Eternal One,
Whose “word the stormy winds fulfil,”
Anon at His command are still?

Who bade the furious whirlwind, even,
Bear on its wings His seer to heaven.
And now He bids you toll that bell,
Not for a sad, funereal knell,
But to remind forgetful men,
That they are to die, and rise again.

CINCINNATI, 1847.

THE DYING ATHEIST.

“ O, DARK! all dark! 'tis darkness all around!
 Where is the light? Will ye not bring a light?
 Bring me a light, I say :—this dark profound
 Is horrible! O, help my struggling sight.”

Alas! sad soul! there's no light for thee now:
 Thou hast denied thy God and Saviour true:
 He is the light—the only light *we* know,
 That can illumine the parting spirit's view.

“ Methinks I dimly see. Ha! what are these?
 Who are ye, wretches, flitting round my bed?
 Ye laugh! why laugh ye? Is it thus ye tease
 A helpless dying man?—O, lift my head.—

“ I ’m sinking—sinking :—lift my head, I say :—
The floor is falling !—call yourselves my friends,
And will not hold me up ? ’Tis my last day !
Who are ye, then ?—O horror ! they are fiends !”

He ’s gone ! he ’s gone ! Go, toll his passing-bell !
That wretched spirit’s part on earth is done :
He thought there were no fiends, no God, no hell :—
Alas ! already, torment has begun.

HEAVENLY MUSIC HEARD IN THE HOUR
OF DEATH.

HARK! hark! what strains are these I hear—I hear?

It is unearthly music:—there! again!

Hark! sure it breathes from some celestial sphere:

It fills my swelling heart, it soothes my pain.

It is—it is the angelic choirs that sing!

Their blessed voices swell upon my ear!

They're giving praises to their Lord and King!

Do you not hear them?—there! again! O hear!

But now 'tis lost!—'tis silence all, once more:—

O sing again, ye blest ones, sing again!

O let me hear that voice I heard before!

O pour forth once again that heavenly strain!

I see them! there! in robes of silvery white!
O beautiful! yes, there they glorious stand!
How sweet they look on me! O beaming bright
The loving eyes of that celestial band!

I come, ye beauteous ones! I come—I come!—
Look there!—a brighter One amid the throng!
It is the Lord Himself! He calls me home!
And soon I, too, shall sing the heavenly song.

MORNING CHIME,

IN THE ISLAND OF CUMBRAE, SCOTLAND.

SWEETLY the morning chime
Steals o'er the silent sea :
In the new-born day's fresh rosy prime,
It sounds quite heavenly.

It calls to morning prayer ;
Invites us low to kneel,
And pour into our Saviour's ear
The hopes and wants we feel.

But fainter, now, and low,
The sounds we scarcely hear :—
Now, swelling on the breeze they go,
And fill the morning air.

And now a single toll
Warns that the hour is near :
“Haste thee,” it says, “O Christian soul,
Haste to the house of prayer.”

Now, all is hushed and still :
The call is no more heard :
The worshipers do seek God's will,
And listen to His Word.

It 'minds me of that hour,
When 'shut' will be the 'door ;'
Then haste, O man, while yet there's power
To heaven's high courts to soar.

THE SUICIDE.

To the river's brink he came.

He stood and pondered long :
 His brow was flushed with a feverish flame,—
 A chill ran o'er his trembling frame,
 As swept the current strong.

Dark spirits urged him hard
 To make the fatal spring :
 "What's life?" they said—"not worth regard :
 You're wretched ; then, why more retard
 Deliverance from its sting?"

But angels whispered then—
 "Unhappy man, beware !
 Wilt thou invade the lions' den ?
 Wilt cast thyself where murderous men
 Await thy soul to tear ?"⁽²⁾

“ Why art thou wretched ? say !
Thou answerest, ‘ ’tis the world : ’
No ! ’tis thy world within : the sway
Of evil passions marks thy way—
Thou art by demons whirled.

“ And think’st thou to escape,
By death, their maddening power ?
Why, ’tis to take the very leap
Into their arms : for death’s no sleep,
But life’s new spirit-hour.

“ Not thus shalt thou find peace.
But call on God above :
He’ll save thee from the fiends that tease,
He’ll bring to thy sad spirit ease,
And bless thee with His love.”

The awe-struck man returned.
He changed his evil way :
With a new flame his bosom burned,
Pleasure’s alluring path he spurned,
And pressed to realms of Day.

DUTY.

UPON the path of duty shines a light,
Far brighter than the sun ;
Nor yield the charms of nature such delight,
As that of duty done.

I wandered through the fields and on the hills ;
The blue sky o'er me hung :
Forgetting human woes and all life's ills,
My heart to nature clung.

I gazed into the peaceful depths of heaven,
Till rapt tears filled my eyes ;
I could have lingered, till approaching Even
Gilded those lovely skies.

And yet, amid my fancy's dreamy joys,
My deepest heart was sad :
Conscience, whose sting the truant e'er annoys,
Inspired an inward dread.

I thought of home, where duties lay undone,
Stern labors for my kind ;—
To write the words of truth and comfort down,
To cheer man's darkling mind.

At once I broke away, and backward turned,
At Duty's faithful call :
No more, indeed, my mind with fancies burned,
But sweet peace filled my soul.

TO THE MOON.

SILENT watcher of the night,
Calm thou lookest down on earth :
Tell what scenes beneath thy sight
Now appear, of grief or mirth.

Rippling flow the streams to ocean,
Glancing in thy silver light :
Wave the trees with gentle motion
To the breezes of the night.

Nature's face is softly beaming,
Like an infant's smile in sleep :
Here and there a star is gleaming
From the placid azure deep.

On the sea the barque careers :
List their merry evening song !
Homeward cheerily she steers :
Waft her, gentle winds, along !

See upon the glistening strand,
Dancers move with agile feet :
In that joyous, youthful band,
Lovers' glances mutual meet.

See, again, where gleam afar
Glittering lights from yonder dwelling :
There the happy bridal star
Rules to-night, all care dispelling.

Hark ! the watch-dog's distant howl,
Baying thee, O shining Orb !
Mark the human fiends that prowl,
Midnight slumbers to disturb.

Man alone the peace destroys,
Shed so sweetly down from heaven :
Guilty man pollutes the joys
God in love has freely given.

Not till Sin did Sorrow come,
Nor Disease with pallid brow :—
Sadly, from yon troubled home,
The sick one's watch-lamp glimmers now.

In the quiet church-yard there,
Death sits silent in thy light,
Plotting griefs and fell despair
For his journey of to-night.

Drop'st thou on those grass-grown tombs
Dewy tears, O solemn Moon ?
Weep'st thou that man's last hour comes,
Tearing from him life's sweet boon ?

Death, there 's One that conquered thee,
Broke thy chains, and rose to heaven :
There, to those from sin set free,
Will ten thousand joys be given.

THE ECHO.

THE Echo responds from the hill's fairy ground :

As I speak, so it speaks ; if I sing, then it sings ;

When I laugh, laughs the hill ; if I sigh, then the sound

Dies away like the wind on Æolian strings.

So my wife's faithful bosom e'er answers to mine :

Her sympathy freely responds to my call ;

Nay, it seems, e'en untold, she my thoughts can divine,—

Be they sweet, be they sad, still she echoes them all.

ON HEARING ONE SINGING IN SLEEP.

I WAKE—I hear sweet singing :—where, O where ?

'Tis by my side :—list ! list ! how soft the strain !

Celestial peace breathes sweetly through that air !

Gently it falls—and now it swells again !

How strange ! She 's singing in her sleep !—“ My love !”

I will not speak, nor break the music's flow :

'Tis like the heavenly harmonies above ;

'Tis like angelic voices, sweet and low.

Now slowly sinks the strain, and dies away.

O what a sphere of peace is breathed around !

How soft she sleeps !—“ Whence sing'st thou, loved one ?
say !

Where hast thou heard that sweet celestial sound ?”

I will not wake her!—Ah! my heart beats hard!

I fear it is some parting-signal given!

It is interior music she has heard—

The Lord is teaching her the airs of heaven.⁽³⁾

1854.

THE ANGEL-BRIDE.

AT evening, as he sat alone,
And mused before the fire,
He seemed to hear his loved one's voice
These gentle words inspire :

“ O come, dear Charles, I wait for thee—
Come to this blessed land !”
He listened—but he heard no more.
He bowed upon his hand ;—

The fountains of his deep heart burst—
Hot tears in silence fell,
As memory brought before his view
The face he loved so well.

Once more he heard that gentle voice,
Which seemed his soul to fill :
“ Weep not,” it said, “ weep not, my love,
But do our good Lord’s will.”

“ I will, I will,” he cried aloud,
“ I ’ll meet thee yet, my bride ;
I ’ll walk the path that leads to heaven,—
O, keep thou by my side.”

And hard the youth essayed to do
God’s will, from day to day ;
To keep the right, resist the wrong,
And tread the heavenly way.

And in temptation’s trying hour,
When well-nigh overcome,
He heard that gentle spirit-voice
Recall him to his home.

Full many a year he struggled on,
But gracious aid was given ;
And one soft eve he passed away,
And joined his bride in heaven.

TO MY MOTHER.

MOTHER, this Sabbath-eve I think of thee!

Thou dwellest in a bright celestial sphere;

Yet be thy angel-presence now with me,—

Perceive my fond remembrance and my tear.

A little child, thou call'dst me to thy knee,

Taught'st me to fold my hands in simple prayer;

Told'st me that angels all the night would be

Watching around me, by my pillow near.

Thou saidst the Lord was good and kind to all,

And gave to each of us our daily bread;

That they who in Him trusted, ne'er would fall,

But would be guarded, loved, and ever led.

I bless thee, mother, for that truthful word :
It has sustained me in temptation's hour ;
Early from thee I learned to seek the Lord,
And He has kept me by His mighty power.

Dear mother,—since thou partedst from the earth,
Taking thine angel flight to heaven above,
O, many trying scenes have proved the worth
Of thy pure teachings and thy looks of love.

And yet more trials, doubtless, are in store,
Before I be allowed to thee to go :
Be near me, mother, as thou wast before,
And make me still the heavenly way to know.

Watch o'er me through the silent hours of night :
Be thou the guardian angel near my head ;
And when again shall dawn the morning light,
Help me the path of duty still to tread.

COCK-CROWING.

I LOVE to hear thy voice, shrill chanticleer,
 Ring through the morning air :
It bringeth to my sad heart thoughts that cheer,
 And drives off worldly care.

It tells me of the bright and peaceful dawn,
 When God yet rules the day,—
Ere waking man, with sin and sorrow worn,
 Disturbs the silent ray.

It tells me of a Providence above,
 Who feeds the birds of air ;
And who will give to all that trust His love,
 Things needful, without care.

It 'minds me of our Lord and Saviour dear,
By soldiers' rude hands kept :
Hearing thy voice, He looked on Peter near,
Who hasted forth and wept.

Thy cheerful call tells of a coming day,
A new and glorious morn,
When all man's sorrows shall be wiped away
And a new world be born.

GUARDIAN ANGELS.

THROUGH all the day, throughout the night,
Fair guardian angels watch o'er man.
The Lord disposes them : His might
Alone can guide the wondrous plan.

In Infancy's soft peaceful time,
Celestial angels hover near :
'Tis they that guard life's lovely prime,
And breathe around a blessed sphere.

In Childhood's busy, smiling hours,
Bright spiritual angels come ;
And aid the mind's expanding powers,
And point them to their heavenly home.

In Youth's inquiring, active day,
 Angelic spirits guard the mind ;
Striving to guide life's opening way,
 And teaching wisdom's path to find.

Throughout life's journey, rough or smooth,
 Those angel guardians still attend ;
Our hours of pain and sorrow soothe,
 And sweetness to our pleasures lend.

And in temptation's struggling hour,
 They fight the battle for the soul ;
And putting forth their mighty power,
 Man's deadly spirit-foes control.

The conflict o'er, they softly come,
 And breathe new joy into the heart ;
Inspiring thoughts of heaven's sweet home,
 Beyond the reach of tempters' art.

And when life's pilgrimage is o'er,
And Jordan's waters now appear,
Those angels wait upon the shore,
And bear us to their own bright sphere.

THE EYE THAT NEVER SLEEPS.

THERE is an Eye that never sleeps,
But ever looks on thee :
And ceaselessly it watches all
Throughout eternity.

At silent midnight's darkest hour,
It sees thee through and through,
As when the brightest noon-day sun
Exposes thee to view.

And when in mid-day's bustling crowd
All unobserved you seem,
Still on you rests that piercing gaze,
With silent, steady beam.

That Eye beholds each deed of wrong,
And notes each thought of ill ;
And marks each faithful duty done
With an approving smile.

In childhood's hour, and manhood's prime,
In feeble tottering age,
It watches, year by year, thy course,
To life's last closing page.

Through death's profound and shadowy vale,
That Eye still cheers the way,
And guides the faithful Christian soul
To realms of endless day.

TEMPTATION.

THICKLY around, Infernal Spirits press,
 And bring a saddening gloom. The mind is dark,
 The love of heaven is cold, and hope is fled:—
 'Tis the soul's night. And in the darkness they
 The base assault commence:—insidious stir
 The viler passions up, and fire the heart
 With hell's gross heats: or, weaving anxious fears
 Around the clouded mind, they hold it snared,
 Fast bound in heavy chains.—“Is there a God?”
 The spirit asks, “is there a heaven above?
 Doth happiness exist? O where? O where?
 This world is cold and bleak; and sickness, want,
 And crime, and wretchedness, and ruin, reign:
 Without—within—all dark!”

Now black Despair
 Approaches, and invites the soul to death—

To self-destruction.—“ Back, base tempter ! No !
Away, ye fiends,—why tempt ye me ? begone !
I have a soul to save ! your souls are lost,
And ye would murder mine.”—Stand firm, my soul !
Hold fast ! There is a God, though now unseen ;
There is a heaven, though shrouded now from view :
There is blest happiness beyond the grave.
This precious Word so teaches : 'tis my lamp,
Whereby, in this mind's night, I still discern
The glimmering path, and find my trembling way
Through the dark vale. Hold fast, my soul ! keep on !
Yes ! on ! keep on ! close by thy side there's One—
Whom now thou seest not—that holds thee up,
And guides thy course, and guards thee from thy foes.
He'll bring thee through : full well He knows the way—
He trod that path before :—He's JESUS named.

Surely the dawn there glimmers ! yes ! the path
Is plainer now. Press on, my soul, press on !
The cloud is breaking ! golden streaks appear
In the sweet East. I feel a balmy air
Upon my spirit breathe, that tells of groves
And the celestial mansions ! O, a dew of peace

Distils from the opening heavens!—Look around!
The view enlarges! Look! O, where am I?
Upon a mountain-top! there beams the Sun—
The golden, heavenly Sun! sweet sing the birds!
The vale is past—look back upon the gloom!
The tempters all are fled or left behind.
From the bright clouds sweet angel-faces smile,
And beckon to me. Yes, blest ones, I come!
O, there *is* happiness—I feel it now!
Sweet peace pervades my soul, and golden light
My mind illuminates!—foretaste of yonder heaven,
Where spirits of the just made perfect dwell,
And they that sowed in tears, shall reap in joy.

THE BRIGHTER WORLD.

THERE 's beauty in the morning sky,
 There 's beauty in the quiet eve,
 There 's beauty in the bright blue eye
 Of Noon-day, looking from above.

There 's beauty on yon shining hill,
 There 's beauty in the peaceful vale,
 There 's beauty in the gentle rill
 That murmuring tells its humble tale.

* * * * *

But there 's a world—O, brighter far !
 More beautiful than sun or star !
 Where He who looks down from afar,
 Is God, the loving.

There, too, do hills of beauty glow,
There charming vales lie spread below,
There streams of life forever flow,
Blessings bestowing.

There lovely, gentle angels dwell ;
O, who their happiness can tell ?
Reader, wouldst thou be one as well ?—
Rapture enjoying ?

Then serve the Lord, while here below :
Study that Word, whose pages glow :
Its precepts do :—and thou shalt know
The bliss of heaven.

CINCINNATI, 1844.

SONNETS.



I.

ETERNITY.

SHADOW of God! without beginning, thou,
Or aught of end. Time, like an island, floats
Upon thy boundless ocean: we, like motes,
Or sand-grains on its shore, weak creatures, bow.

Into thy past recesses God looks now,
And His deep Eye alone. It ne'er promotes
Our spirits' good, to venture in our boats
Of tiny thoughts, on that dark waste to row.

But to the eternal future we may lift
Our hopeful eyes. 'Tis God's most precious gift—
Beneath the light of Revelation's sun
To view that glorious landscape spread before,
And know that when life's faithful duty's done,
Heaven's myriad blisses wait us evermore.

II.

NIGHT.

SLOWLY the rising Night hath climbed the sky,
 And set her jewelled throne. Around her blaze
 The starry worlds, and in the west doth lie
 The pale new moon, now in her earliest phase.

Forth meditation walks,—upon the ways
 Of man to ponder, and of God Most High ;
 Backward to look on childhood's merry days,
 And forward to the grave approaching nigh.

O solemn Night! beneath thy canopy
 As glide the silent hours, I lift my thought
 To higher worlds than all I gaze on now :
 Thither when called—armed with the panoply
 Of humble faith in Him whom oft I've sought,
 Before His glittering throne I'll trusting bow.

III.

TO CARE.

HENCE! anxious, carking Care! what dost thou here?

Thy yellow, wrinkled skin, and visage pale,

Thy dead dishevelled hair, and look of ail,

Tell that thou com'st from some sub-earthly sphere.

Thou 'rt risen from that gloomy region, where

No blessed light nor warmth nor airs prevail,

But wretchedness and sadness, rage and wail:

Back! hateful monster, to thy darkness there.

Come, peaceful, heaven-born Trust, be thou my stay!

And lift my lightened heart to realms of day,

Where happy, joyous angels sport and sing.

They know no care; their Heavenly Lord alway

Feeds them, and keeps them 'neath His sheltering wing:

He to me, too, all needful things will bring.

IV.

TO PAIN.

(Written after a night of pain.)

OH! ugly is thy look, O cruel Pain,
 And heavy is thy hand; and when the hour
 Of suffering is come, and thy stern power
 Presses upon me,—then all life seems vain.

In the still darkness of the night, thy reign
 Seems hardest, fiercest; and I trembling cower
 'Neath thy resistless might, and think the flower
 Of joyous health will ne'er be mine again.

But in the midst, a mild, soft light descends,
 And meek-eyed Patience gently o'er me bends:
 "Look up," she says, "look up! the Lord of love—
 He who on earth the sick did heal—still lends
 His tender ear: look up and pray! His dove
 Of heavenly peace He'll send thee from above."

V.

TOIL ON!

TOIL on! toil on! your labor's not in vain!

This life's the seed-time; but the harvest-ear

In Paradise shall ripen, and appear

Waving in golden beauty o'er the plain.

Toil on, and bear on patiently! a stain

Is washed from the worn heart with every tear:

Sorrow, the purifier, reigns; but fear

Shall turn to faith, and peace shall spring from pain.

Toil on! the Lord is guiding thee. His eye

Upon thee rests each moment; and His hand

Is leading thee to heavenly mountains high,

Though dark be now the path, and drear the land.

Toil on! the dawn will open presently,

And find thee one of the celestial band.

VI.

ON DEATH.

DEATH is the entrance to a higher state.

Man never dies : once born, he lives for aye.
 Death is but change of place : 'tis but the gate,
 That opens to scenes of everlasting day.

The hand of Death doth but remove the weight,
 That holds the soaring spirit to its clay :
 At once it mounts to the supernal height—
 To heaven, where all is beauteous, bright, and gay.

'Tis to the wicked, only, death is sad :
 They sink, not rise, when Death doth cut the string,—
 And down they settle in the dark abyss.
 But for the good, O let no tears be shed !
 They are to glory risen ; and angels bring
 Their joyous spirits to the groves of bliss.

VII.

THE SEA.

THE sea! the sea! how foams the tossing sea,
 And roars and dashes on the solid rocks!
 Against the proud ship's side, with crashing shocks,
 Rush the wild waves, and threaten angrily.

The sea! the sea! the smooth and placid sea!
 How calm it lies! and, gently heaving, looks
 Like a good man in slumber! See, the flocks
 Browse on its shore, so still and peacefully!

What doth it image? in the raging storm
 I see portrayed hell's wild and furious form:
 But in its placid face is mirrored heaven.
 So is the mind of man a deep, wide sea:—
 When tossed with passions, 'tis by hell's blasts driven:
 When filled with love, 'tis heaven's serenity.

VIII.

THE STARS.

YE distant suns, that beam upon the night,
I gaze upon your silent, twinkling fires,
With raptured eye, that with the effort tires,
Striving to fathom your abyss of light.

Yon ever-burning lamps, arranged in bright
Mysterious rows,—those unheard, starry lyres,
That make the music of the spheres, on wires
Of golden beams,—absorb my ravished sight.

All utter, ceaseless, their Creator's praise!
In this vast temple of the vaulted sky,
All things are silent worshipers, and raise
The thoughtful spirit to its God on high.
Respond, my heart, and 'mid these glories see
The beaming face of unveiled Deity.

IX.

TO SIRIUS.

STAR of great glory, leader of the host,
 How flashest thou throughout the silent night!
 Thou, and thy comrade near, Orion bright,
 With glittering belt and sword, firm at his post.

Through all the smiling summer thou art lost :
 But when sharp winter comes, then on the sight
 Climbing Orion gleams ; and thy great light
 Comes blazing after, first though hindermost.

There shinest thou in splendor in thy place,
 Brightest of all the stars that God has made :
 Sun of the suns that fill heaven's boundless space !
 O, may'st thou never from thy glory fade !
 Yet one fair soul, with love and truth endowed,
 Is nobler far than all that glittering crowd.

X.

N I A G A R A.

ROAR on, great Cataract, and dash full high
 Thy glittering spray to heaven! 'Tis incense sent
 To thy Creator's throne; and in it bent
 The bow of peace, that charms the gazing eye.

A thousand ages, to the listening sky
 Hath this loud anthem pealed! The waters, pent
 Between the towering cliffs, find angry vent
 Over the precipice, and foaming fly.

Over—and over—over—over—down,
 Headlong they wildly plunge and rush and roar;
 Through night and day, through seasons green and brown,
 Over they glide and fall, still o'er and o'er:—
 'Tis like life's current, which through smile and frown
 Presses still onward to the eternal shore.

XI.

CALIFORNIA.

THE El Dorado found at last! The gold
For ages here had lain in hill and stream;
And through the glistening wave its yellow beam
Shot up, or glittered 'mid the stones and mould.

No eye had seen, no tongue the tale had told—
Save those of roving Indian, who would deem
The thing of little worth—till once its gleam
Burst on the sight of Anglo-Saxon bold.

'Twas at a time, when truth and love began
To spread more glowingly from man to man,—
The feeble dawn of a new Golden Age.
O, may that heavenly ore of love increase!
May mankind live henceforth in love and peace,
And history commence a purer page!

XII.

THE BAY OF NEW YORK.

UPON the Battery I stand, and gaze
Over the spacious bay. Loud Broadway's roar
Distant behind me sounds. Along the shore,
On right and left, the vessels' crowded maze!

The sun is setting; and his western blaze
With golden radiance floods the waters o'er;
While in the distant South, a thin blue haze
Tells where old Ocean lifts his forehead hoar.

Centre of commerce! at thy sea-girt feet
The world, proud City, doth its treasures lay:
Here ships from Europe, Ind, and Afric meet;
All flags wave mingling in thy noble bay.
O, may'st thou be as rich in thought and worth,
As in the meaner treasures of the earth!

XIII.

MOUNT AUBURN.⁽¹⁾

HOME of the silent, unforgotten dead!

I walk and meditate amid thy bowers,

While round me stand the monumental towers,
That cover many a care-worn heart and head.

Here Channing sleeps,—who oft hath nobly led

The moral brave against stern Calvin's powers:

Here Spurzheim⁽²⁾ rests, who richly on us shed

The light of truth, in philosophic hours.

Yet lie they really here? O no! the grave

Can ne'er hold men: a sod binds not the soul.

Leaving their dust behind,—with manhood whole

They've joined the Mighty One who came to save:

There, purified from error, they will love

And worship Jesus, the one Lord above.

XIV.

MOONLIGHT IN CINCINNATI.

SOFT falls the light upon the hills around :
 Sleeps the fair City 'neath the silvery ray :
 Throughout the spacious streets is heard no sound,
 As bright they gleam with moonlight's lovelier day.

The houses' shadows lie along the ground,
 And forms of trees that graceful fringe the way :—
 And mark the gleaming river's distant bound,
 As on its face the quivering moonbeams play!

The Fourth-Street clock strikes twelve. Sleep flies afar !
 I gaze upon the scene with rapt delight.
 But hark ! I hear the strains of a guitar :—
 The serenader is abroad to-night :
 Beneath the window of his lady fair,
 " Sleep On ! " he sings, and wakes her with the air.

XV.

JONATHAN EDWARDS.⁽³⁾

EDWARDS, our country's earliest master-mind!

A hundred years⁽⁴⁾ have rolled away, since first
 From the deep wilderness thy strong voice burst,
 Uttering great thoughts from soarings unconfined:—

Soarings too high, indeed, for mortal kind,
 Without God's special leading! Burning thirst
 To scan the Almighty's ways,—from self to find,
 Untaught, His secrets out—made man accursed.

So, thy great mind, by reasonings led astray,
 Portrayed our God a partial Deity.

But now, in heaven,—where, sure, thou hast a part,
 An angel bright, thine errors cast away,—
 How smil'st thou at that poor fallacious art,⁽⁵⁾
 Which contradicts the logic of the heart!

XVI.

H O W A R D.

HIGH-SOULED philanthropist! whose life below
 Was, like thy Master's, spent in doing good :
 No nobler name than thine can England show,—
 Greater, by far, than all the warrior brood.

The Wellingtons and Nelsons stoutly stood,
 And fought for Britain's glory; but the flow
 Of human blood was on them,—not the glow
 Of heavenly love to man's whole brotherhood.

But thou, pure spirit, as on angel-wing
 From heaven descending, sought'st the place of woe;—
 Didst wipe the dungeon-damp away, and bring
 Cheer to the captive's heart, and hope bestow:
 Then, like a noble martyr, diedst afar,⁽⁶⁾
 And shin'st in heaven a bright, eternal star.

XVII.

OBERLIN.⁽⁷⁾

Lost sheep upon the mountains! who will go
And bring them safe into the Saviour's fold?
O, is there none that cares for human woe?
Are all men bent on pleasure, fame, or gold?

"Send me," said youthful Oberlin, "I'll go!"
He went; and to the untutored wild-men told
How lovely Jesus came to earth, and sold
His life, to save them from the infernal foe.

They listened, and with humble faces bowed
To that true word, and owned the Saviour's name.
Led by their faithful pastor, soon they showed
A happier state: abundant blessings came.
He found that country as a desert wild:
He taught, he labored,—and the desert smiled.

XVIII.

S W E D E N B O R G .⁽⁸⁾

HAIL, Swedish sage! the loftiest of the great!
 Obedient servant of our blessed Lord!
 Unfolder of the depths of God's pure Word!
 Revealer of the hidden spirit-state!

Thy searching mind, profound yet ne'er elate,
 First through all Nature's science ranged abroad:
 Then, called to loftier flights, supernal soared,
 And meek admittance found at heaven's high gate.

Few know thee yet, and some have called thee mad:—
 So called they an Apostle, Paul, of old;
 But coming ages, with affections glad,
 Rejoicing in the light thy works unfold,
 Will name thee first of wisdom's teachers given,
 And for thy mission bless the Lord of heaven.

NOTES.

NOTES ON THE PLEASURES OF RELIGION.

PART I.

¹ Line 4. *Have now been given.*

The reference, in these opening lines, as will to most readers be obvious, is to Akenside's "Pleasures of Imagination," Rogers's "Pleasures of Memory," and Campbell's "Pleasures of Hope." The first of these works was published in 1744, the second in 1792, and the last in 1799.

² Line 27. *Philomel.*

Philomela—the nightingale.

³ Line 188. *Rejoiced my day to see—he saw—was glad.*

See the Gospel of John, eighth chapter, fifty-sixth verse.

⁴ Line 329. *Conjugal.*

This is preferred to the more common term *conjugal*, both as softer in sound, and as being better suited to the requirements of iambic verse. In the Latin, there are two terms, having precisely the same signification, *conjugalis* and *conjugialis*, both classical; thus we find *amor conjugalis*, in Tacitus,—*conjugiale fœdus*, in Ovid. Our English word *conjugal* has been derived

from one of these, and that the harsher of the two : why should not our language be enriched by a corresponding derivative from the other? The term *conjugal* is not now used for the first time : to the readers of Swedenborg it will be familiar.

PART II.

¹ Line 318. *Already lost.*

“He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”—John iii. 18.

² Line 370. *Wordy prayers and wearying preachings, too.*

Our Lord seems to rebuke the practice of long public prayers, when he says, “When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking: be not ye therefore like unto them.”—Matthew vi. 7, 8.

In regard to preachings,—short sermons, it is generally agreed, are more effective than long ones: why will not preachers bear this in mind? “Thirty minutes for a written sermon, and forty for an extemporaneous one,” was the rule of a distinguished preacher, Cecil. And it was a good rule,—though perhaps thirty minutes are enough for either kind; after that length of time, it will be generally observed that, even under good preaching, the attention of a congregation begins to flag.

³ Line 414. *Beyond the grave, alas! hope cannot range.*

“He that is unjust,” says the Scripture, “let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still, and he that is holy, let him be holy still” (Rev. xxii. 11): showing that there is no change after death.

“It has been granted me,” says Swedenborg, “to discourse with some who lived two thousand years ago, and whose lives are described in history and hence made known: they were found to be still like themselves, and altogether such as they had been described, thus the same in respect to the love which constituted their life. There were others who lived seventeen hundred years ago, and who are also known from history; and others who lived four hundred years ago, and others, three, and so on, with whom, also, it was granted to hold converse; and it was found that a similar affection still prevailed with them, with no other difference than that the delights of their love were changed into such spiritual things as correspond. The life of the ruling love is never changed with any one, even to eternity; for every one is his own love, and therefore to change it with a spirit would be to deprive him of his life, or to extinguish it. The reason is, that man after death can no longer be reformed by instruction, as in the world; because the ultimate plane, which consists of natural knowledges and affections, is then quiescent, and cannot be opened, because it is not spiritual: and yet upon that plane the interiors of the mind rest, as a house on its foundation. Hence it is, that man remains to eternity, such as his life had been in the world.”—*Treatise on Heaven and Hell*, n. 480.

⁴ Lines 427, 429. *The drama's art.—The graceful dance.*

The drama, in itself considered, is a highly intellectual, and might be made an instructive and unexceptionable, entertainment. For a just view of this subject, let me refer the reader to the pure-minded Justice Talfourd's plea for the drama, at the close of his preface to "Ion."

As to dancing, it is to the young as natural, and—if restrained within proper bounds—as innocent, as the frisking of the lambkin or the kid. That these things are liable to abuse, is no just argument against their use: every gift of Providence is liable to abuse, even eating and drinking. Our Lord, in his Parable of the Prodigal Son, speaks expressly of "music and dancing," and in no terms of reprobation, but rather of implied approbation. See Luke xv. 25.

NOTES ON THE MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

¹ Page 67. This bell, it is understood, was afterwards recovered, and now hangs in the Seamen's Chapel, New York.

² Page 79. *Await thy soul to tear.*

Swedenborg, in his "Spiritual Diary," relates a remarkable instance of the miserable consequence of suicide. "A certain person," says he, "had, in the life of the body, been reduced by melancholy to despair, until, being instigated by diabolical spirits, he destroyed himself by thrusting a knife into his body. This spirit came to me, complaining that he was miserably infested by

evil spirits, saying that he was amongst furies, who continually infested him. He was also seen by me, holding a knife in his hand, as though he would plunge it into his breast, but with which he strove hard, as if wishing rather to cast it from him, but in vain. For what happens at the hour of death, remains a long time before it vanishes away." From this striking statement it may be learned, how vain, as well as sinful, it is, to commit suicide in the hope of escaping from wretchedness: it is but to plunge into misery still deeper: it is to leap into the very pit whence the influx of melancholy comes.

A poet has well said,

"The coward sneaks to death: the brave lives on."

³ Page 89. *The Lord is teaching her the airs of heaven.*

The incident, here related, actually occurred: the sad presentiment has been fulfilled; and that pure spirit has since been called away, to join the angelic choirs.

NOTES ON THE SONNETS.

¹ Page 121. *Mount Auburn.*

The picturesque Cemetery near Boston, Massachusetts.

² *Spurzheim.*

The distinguished advocate, and one of the founders, of the science of Phrenology. He died at Boston, while on a visit to

the United States, in 1832. His remains were among the first laid in the cemetery of Mount Auburn: his monument occupies a conspicuous position, not far from the entrance.

³ Page 123. *Jonathan Edwards.*

America may justly be proud of Jonathan Edwards, as one of the greatest intellects the world has produced. The admiration expressed for this great man by European writers, especially by the English,—is almost unbounded. Robert Hall, in the enthusiasm of his admiration, terms him “the greatest of the sons of men;” and Chalmers’s language is almost as strong.

⁴ *A hundred years have rolled away, &c.*

Edwards’s famous treatise on the “Freedom of the Will” was published at Boston, Massachusetts, in 1754; it has, therefore, now passed its hundredth year, and may be said to stand—at least as to age—at the head of American classics. However much we may dissent from its conclusions, the grasp of intellect displayed in its reasonings is astonishing. It was composed in the short period of four months and a half, while Edwards was engaged as a missionary to the Indians.

⁵ *Poor fallacious art,*

viz. logic. The great work of Edwards only proves how weak an instrument, after all, is mere human logic in the investigation of Divine things. Following its narrow chain of reasonings, many of the links of which are but fallacies, it loses sight of wide fields of thought, where the pure silver of the truth lies hid.

Jonathan Edwards was born at Windsor, Connecticut, in 1703 ; and died in 1758, while President of the College at Princeton, New Jersey.

⁶ Page 124. *Then, like a noble martyr, diedst afar.*

Howard, after visiting most of the prisons and hospitals of Europe, in his "circumnavigation of charity" (as Burke expressed it), fell at length a victim to his benevolence. Near the distant town of Cherson, in Russia, visiting a person suffering under an infectious disease, he took it, and died soon after. He seemed to have a presentiment of this ; for, on leaving England, he made his will, in the full expectation that he should not return. He thought he might die of the plague in Egypt, which country it was his intention to visit ; and, taking leave of an old friend, he said calmly, "We shall soon meet in heaven:" adding, "The way to heaven from Grand Cairo, is as near as from London." This was a Christian hero.

⁷ Page 125. *Oberlin.*

The good pastor of the Ban de la Roche, a mountainous district in the north-east of France. See the interesting account of his life and labors, "By a Lady."

⁸ Page 126. *Swedenborg.*

This great and much misunderstood writer was born at Stockholm in Sweden in 1688, and died in London in 1772. Till fifty-five years of age, he was entirely devoted to various branches of natural science, and became very eminent in those pursuits,

his works both on the Animal and Mineral kingdoms of nature being known and celebrated throughout Europe. He held for a long time the office of Assessor to the Royal Metallic College of Sweden. The last thirty years of his life were devoted to theology. The first volume of his greatest work, the *Arcana Cœlestia*, was published in 1749. It is a Commentary on the Books of Genesis and Exodus, and may truly be said to throw more light on these as well as on other parts of Scripture, than all other Commentaries together. His last work, the "Universal Theology" or "True Christian Religion," is a Summary of Doctrine; and, considered simply as the production of a man above eighty years of age, has, for grasp of thought and vigor of expression,—not to speak, here, of higher qualities—no parallel in theological literature. See White's Life of Swedenborg.

THE END.

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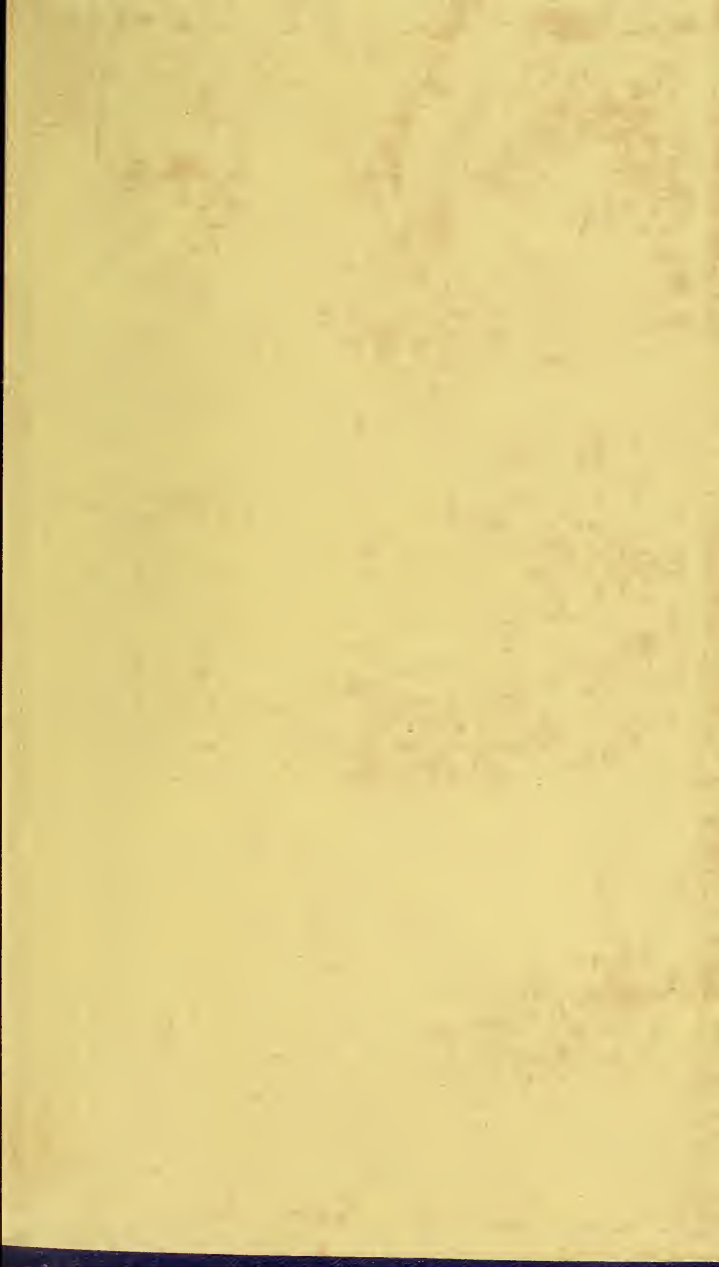


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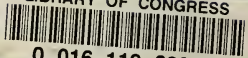
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